

UNNUMBERED LETTERS ISSUED FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2003

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01-15-03	USDA Video, Teleconferencing, and Radio (VTR) Center Services	N.O.Officials
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01-24-03	Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program Maximum Dollar Amount on Awards for Fiscal Year 2003	S/D

January 3, 2003

SUBJECT: 2003 Payroll Changes

TO: Rural Development National Office Employees

With the beginning of calendar year 2003, a number of payroll related changes will be taking place over the next few weeks. Your paycheck will be affected by many of the changes. Attached is a summary of those changes along with other reminders related to payroll.

(Signed by Rose Mary Rowland) for

TIMOTHY J. RYAN
Assistant Administrator
for Human Resources

Attachment

EXPIRATION DATE:
December 31, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

-2003 PAYROLL CHANGES-

1. Social Security and Medicare Deductions

The Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) and Medicare (HITS) tax rate will remain 7.65 percent. Of the 7.65 percent, the 6.20 percent social security (OASDI) portion will have a maximum annual earnings amount of \$87,000 with a maximum amount paid by the employee of \$5,394.00. The 1.45 percent Medicare portion does not have a maximum annual earnings or a maximum amount paid by the employee. All earnings subject to Medicare withholdings will be at 1.45 percent. NFC will automatically withhold these taxes based on the new wage base. No action on the part of the employee is necessary.

2. Federal Income Tax (January 9 Paycheck for Pay Period 25)

Effective January 1, 2003, the Federal income tax withholding formula will change with an increase in the exemption allowance from \$2900 to \$3000. Beginning with salary payments for Pay Period 25, Federal income tax will automatically be withheld in accordance with the new formula. State and/or local tax changes will be effective at this time. No action on the part of the employee is necessary.

3. General Schedule Pay Adjustment (February 6 Paycheck for Pay Period 1)

Base pay adjustments of 3.1% are effective on January 12, 2003, with your paycheck for Pay Period 1. Salary tables are available at <http://www.opm.gov/oca/payrates>.

4. Federal Employees' Health Benefits (February 6 Paycheck for Pay Period 1)

Whether you changed your health insurance coverage or not, you will most likely notice some change in the withholding rate due to an increase/decrease in the premium rate of your plan.

5. Combined Federal Campaign (February 6 Paycheck for Pay Period 1)

Contributions given through payroll deductions for calendar year 2003 will be effective with Pay Period 1.

6. Thrift Savings Plan

The Thrift Savings Plan Open Season this year is from October 15 through December 31, 2002. You may enroll in the Thrift Savings Plan during open season using Form TSP-1 or through Employee Express. TSP-1 Forms received after December 31, 2002, will be returned. You may allocate future contributions or request interfund transfers On-line or using Form TSP-50 which must be sent directly to the TSP Service Office in New Orleans, LA.

Other Reminders:

Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance:

Employees who have Optional Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance and reach the following ages: 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60 will see an increase in the cost of this coverage in the Pay Period following their birthday. In addition, there will be a change in the premium rates and new age bands have been added for Options B and C effective January 3, 2003.

Parking Incentive:

You may get a slight increase in your paycheck, if you claimed an eligible parking benefit due to not having to pay tax on the amount claimed.

Residence Address:

Please be sure that if you change your residence, you should submit a change of address (Form AD-349) to Human Resources, or make the change yourself in Employee Express at 1-800-827-6291 or at www.employeeexpress.gov. This will ensure that you receive your Earnings & Leave Statement, W-2, TSP information and other official personnel/payroll documents. If you have a bond allotment, you will also need to complete a new savings bond card to "change inscription". *If you are changing your residence state, you must also complete a new state tax form. If you do not complete a new form, your state tax deductions will automatically cease, and you could find yourself with a big tax bill at the end of the year.*

Employment Verification:

Mortgage lenders and rental property owners request written employment verification. We find that many of these requests have been addressed incorrectly, resulting in delays in the mortgage or renting process. The major problem seems to be that lenders address the forms to “USDA Personnel Office,” which is exactly where they will be sent (to the Office of Human Resources Management in the Jamie Whitten Administration Building). These forms will then arrive in our office two or three weeks late, if at all. Please advise lenders or any other businesses sending forms on your behalf that the mailing address is USDA/Rural Development, Human Resources, STOP: 0730, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-0730.

To avoid the above delays, you may find it more advantageous to use **“The Work Number For Everyone,”** a service that has been available since 1997 and which allows you to provide your verifier with information by which they can verify employment and salary information through a touch-tone phone immediately upon request. This service uses one nationwide number, is faster, more efficient and provides more standardized responses to employment verification requests. This service can be reached by calling 1-800-367-2884. To access this service, you will use the month and day of your birthday as your Personal Identification Number (PIN).

Statement of Earnings and Leave:

Your statement of earnings and leave contains a wealth of information about your payroll, including the number of exemptions and marital status for the Federal and state tax withholdings, Federal Employees Health Benefit enrollment code and amount of deduction, Federal Employees Group Life Insurance enrollment information and amount of deduction, Thrift Savings Plan distribution information, financial allotment information (including the account number), etc. In many cases if you make a change that affects your payroll, the only way you will know if this has been processed correctly is by checking your statement of earnings and leave.

Earnings and leave statements are your personal records of your payroll actions. They should be retained when applying for loans, etc. If you have any questions on your statement, please call your servicing Human Resources Assistant. You may elect to receive an electronic version. To elect to receive an electronic version, go to www.nfc.usda.gov.

Employee Personal Page:

The NFC Employee Personal Page allows employees to view their payroll, leave, travel, life insurance, health insurance, savings bonds, and other personal information. The Employee Personal Page eliminates the need to request information from your personnel office, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, can be accessed at work or home and is reliable since the information is obtained from the NFC mainframe computer files that contain your payroll/personnel/travel data. This information may be accessed at www.nfc.usda.gov.

Employee Express:

Employee Express is an innovative automated system that puts Federal employees in control of processing their own discretionary personnel-payroll data without using paper forms. Transactions such as financial allotments, health benefit (FEHB) open season changes, TSP open season changes, direct deposits, Federal and state taxes, and home addresses can be processed by Employee Express. Employees should contact their servicing personnel office if they are not sure which transactions are available during an open season period. Employee Express may be accessed at www.employeeexpress.gov.

Voluntary Contributions to Retirement Fund:

Employees covered under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or the CSRS Offset provisions may establish a voluntary contribution account to purchase additional annuity. Total contributions may not exceed 10 percent of the total basic pay the employee has received during all of his or her Federal service. Voluntary contributions earn a variable interest at the rate determined by the Treasury Department each calendar year, based on the average yield of new investments purchased by the Retirement Fund during the previous year. The interest is compounded annually on December 31. For additional information you may access the Office of Personnel Management at www.opm.gov/asd.

Thrift Savings Plan:

If you wish to access your account information to view, request, change, cancel the allocation of future contributions, or interfund transfers; go to the Thrift Savings Plan Web site at www.tsp.gov or call ThriftLine (504-255-8777). The TSP Web site and ThriftLine are the most efficient ways to make investment allocations and/or interfund transfers. To access your account via the Web site or by telephone, you will need a PIN. You may request a PIN from the Web site or by calling ThriftLine.

January 7, 2003

SUBJECT: Interest Rate for Direct Business
and Industry Loans

TO: Rural Development State Directors,
Rural Development Managers,
and Community Development Managers

The following interest rate is in effect January 1, 2003, through March 31, 2003.

<u>Loan Type</u>	<u>Existing Rate</u>	<u>New Rate</u>
Direct Business and Industry	4.750%	4.250%

Please notify appropriate personnel of this rate.

(Signed by James S. Hachell) for

JOHN ROSSO
Administrator
Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Sent by Electronic Mail on 12-27-02 at 2:30 p.m by PAD.

EXPIRATION DATE:
March 31, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

January 7, 2002

SUBJECT: Interest Rate Changes for Housing Programs
and Credit Sales (Nonprogram)

TO: Rural Development State Directors,
Rural Development Managers,
and Community Development Managers

ATTN: Rural Housing, Program Director

The following interest rate, effective January 1, 2003, is changed as follows:

<u>Loan Type</u>	<u>Existing Rate</u>	<u>New Rate</u>
ALL LOAN TYPES		
Treasury Judgement Rate	1.790%	1.560%

The Treasury Judgement rate is based on the weekly average 1-year Constant Maturity Treasury (CMT) yield. The current rate shown above is as of the week ending 11/29/02. The actual judgement rate that will be used will be the rate for the calendar week preceding the date the defendant becomes liable for interest.

EXPIRATION DATE:
January 31, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

This rate may be found by going to the Federal Reserve web site for the weekly average 1-year CMT yield (www.federalreserve.gov/releases/h15/data/wf/tcm1y.txt).

Please notify appropriate personnel of this interest rate information.

(Signed by David J. Villano) for

ARTHUR A. GARCIA
Administrator
Rural Housing Service

Sent by Electronic Mail on 12-27-02 at 2:30 p.m. by PAD.

January 7, 2003

SUBJECT: Interest Rates for Water and Waste Disposal
Loans, Watershed Protection and Flood
Prevention Loans, and Resource Conservation
and Development Loans

TO: Rural Development State Directors,
Rural Development Managers,
and Community Development Managers

Effective from January 1, 2003, through March 31, 2003, the interest rates for Water and Waste Disposal Loans are as follows:

Poverty Line...unchanged at.....4.500%
Intermediate....unchanged at.....4.625%
Market.....unchanged at.....4.875%

Also, the rate for Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Loans and Resource Conservation and Development Loans is as follows:

CURRENT RATE	NEW RATE
4.875%	4.875%

Please notify appropriate personnel of these rates.

(Signed by Hilda Gay Legg)

Hilda Gay Legg
Administrator
Rural Utilities Service

Sent by Electronic Mail on 12-27-02 at 11:40 p.m. byPAD.

EXPIRATION DATE:
March 31, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

January 7, 2002

SUBJECT: Annual Interest Rate Changes

TO: Rural Development State Directors,
Rural Development Managers,
and Community Development Managers

ATTN: Rural Housing, Program Director

The following interest rate is in effect for loans approved after the beginning of business January 1, 2003.

<u>Loan Type</u>	<u>Existing Rate</u>	<u>New Rate</u>
ALL LOAN TYPES		
Farm Labor Housing- State Director Exception	8.500%	8.375%

(Signed by David J. Villano) for

ARTHUR A. GARCIA
Administrator
Rural Housing Service

Sent by Electronic Mail on 12-27-02 at 2:30 p.m. by PAD.

EXPIRATION DATE:
December 31, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

January 7, 2003

SUBJECT: Administrative Budget Teleconference

TO: Rural Development State Directors

ATTN: Administrative Program Directors

A teleconference has been scheduled for **Tuesday, January 21, 2003, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. EST**. To connect to the teleconference, please call **202-554-1742**. The access code is 5262 followed by the pound (#) sign. A total of 60 lines have been made available for this call, so please maximize the number of employees calling from each location.

The purpose of the teleconference is to discuss issues related to the FY 2003 administrative budget and the Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS). Deborah Collins will discuss vendor codes to be used on agreements and common agreement numbers for Greenbook and Working Capital Fund. All State personnel who perform work on administrative budgets and/or FFIS for your area are encouraged to participate.

If you have issues of a general nature that you would like to have addressed, please relay your **requests no later than COB Wednesday, January 15, 2003**. General administrative budget issues may be sent to Deborah Watt at dwatt@rdasun2.rurdev.usda.gov. Issues relating to FFIS may be sent to the Fiscal Control Branch at fcf@stl.rural.usda.gov. Due to time constraints, we may not be able to address specific questions regarding your State that do not pertain to the mission area as a whole.

Please call Deborah Watt at 202-692-0124 if you have any questions regarding the teleconference.

(Signed by Deborah B. Lawrence)

DEBORAH B. LAWRENCE
Acting Director
Budget Division

EXPIRATION DATE:
January 31, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by Electronic Mail on 01-08-03 at 10:00 a.m. by BD.

January 7, 2003

SUBJECT: Administrative Budget Teleconference

TO: National Office Officials

A teleconference has been scheduled for **Wednesday, January 22, 2003, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. EST.** The Teleconference Center in **Room 1605-S** has been reserved for use by employees in the South Building and the Whitten Building in Washington, DC. Only employees at other locations may dial into the teleconference by calling **202-554-1742.** The access code is 5261 followed by the (#) sign. A total of 25 lines are available, so employees are urged to maximize the number of employees calling from each location to ensure access for everyone who wants to attend.

The purpose of the teleconference is to discuss issues related to the FY 2003 administrative budget and the Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS).

Deborah Collins will discuss vendor codes to be used on agreements and common agreement numbers for Greenbook and Working Capital Fund. All National Office personnel who perform work on administrative budgets and/or FFIS for your area are encouraged to participate.

If you have issues of a general nature that you would like to have addressed, please relay your requests **no later than COB Thursday, January 16, 2003.** General administrative budget issues may be sent to Deborah Watt at dwatt@rdasun2.rurdev.usda.gov. Issues relating to FFIS may be sent to the Fiscal Control Branch at fcf@stl.rural.usda.gov. Due to time constraints, we may not be able to address specific questions regarding your area that do not pertain to the mission area as a whole.

Please call Deborah Watt at 202-692-0124 if you have any questions regarding the teleconference.

(Signed by Deborah B. Lawrence)

DEBORAH B. LAWRENCE
Acting Director
Budget Division

EXPIRATION DATE:
January 31, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by Electronic Mail on 01-08-03 at 9:55 a.m. by BD.

January 7, 2003

TO: All State Directors
Rural Development

ATTENTION: Single Family Housing Program Directors

FROM: David J. Villano
Deputy Administrator
Single Family Housing

SUBJECT: Questions & Answers Pertaining to the 90-Day Implementation of the
Area Loan Limits

The purpose of this unnumbered letter is to formally provide a list of answers to questions asked pertaining to the October 28, 2002 memorandum regarding the 90-day implementation of the area loan limits, which can be found at <http://rdinit.usda.gov/regs/ul/uloctober02.pdf>.

Please note that Option 1 refers to the residential cost data plus the market value of a typical improved site and Option 2 refers to the State Housing Authority's (SHA) non-target limits for both new construction and existing.

Question: Should the construction of a garage be considered when determining the typical market value of an improved site?

Answer: No. The cost of a garage is already included in the residential cost data. Recall that the residential cost data is based on the following prescribed set of parameters that closely defines modest housing:

- Type/Quality: Single-Family/Average
- Square Footage of Living Area: 1,300 / Basement: 1,300 square feet unfinished
- Exterior/Roof Cover: Siding/Asphalt Shingle
- Garage: Attached, one car (200 square feet)
- Heating: Warm and cool air

EXPIRATION DATE:
October 31, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Housing Programs

Question: What is included in the market value of a typical improved site?

Answer: The market value of a typical improved site includes the following:

- Modest site – The site must not be large enough to be subdivided and the property must not include farm service buildings.
- Water and sewage
- Utility hook-up
- Modest landscaping
- Driveway

Question: Can both Option 1 (residential cost data plus improved site value) and Option 2 (SHA's limits) be used in a State?

Answer: No. The same option must be used throughout the State. A State can not use Option 1 for County A and Option 2 for County B.

In addition, once an option is chosen, States are not authorized to alternate between options throughout the year without prior approval from the Deputy Administrator of Single Family Housing (SFH). Requests for a change must be accompanied by documentation to support the request.

Question: If a State elects to use the SHA's non-target limits, does the State still have to determine the typical market value of an improved site in each county?

Answer: Yes. States must still determine the typical market value for improved sites in each county since the figure derived in Option 1 is used as a benchmark. Option 2 can only be used if the figures are within 10 percent of Option 1.

Question: If the SHA has a separate limit for new construction and existing properties, how is the 10 percent benchmark applied?

Answer: The higher of the two figures would be used to determine if Option 2 is within 10 percent of Option 1.

Question: Can the SHA's limits still be adopted if the 10 percent benchmark is not met in rare incidences?

Answer: Yes. Provided that the majority of the counties are within the 10 percent benchmark of Option 1 and the State can justify the deviation from the benchmark in those rare incidences.

Question: If the SHA issues separate limits for Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) and/or manufactured housing, would these limits have to be adopted as well?

Answer: Yes. These limits would also be subject to the 10 percent benchmark requirement.

Question: Our SHA has separate figures for new and existing properties. How do we handle this in UniFi?

At the present time, the UniFi system is only capable of acknowledging one area loan limit for each county.

The use of multiple limits within a county will pose a serious system limitation. Until the system can be modified, the highest limit will be entered into UniFi and users must be vigilant when running the calculations to ensure that the appropriate limit is manually entered.

Question: If we select Option 2 and the SHA revises their limits during the fiscal year, can we then adopt their revised limits?

States can submit a request for prior approval to the Deputy Administrator of SFH to adopt the revised limits provided the revised limits do not exceed ten percent of Option 1 as determined when the original area loan limits were established.

Question: When is it appropriate to base the area loan limits on a regional or statewide basis?

Answer: Establishing the limits on a regional or statewide basis is only allowable if the counties that constitute the area are similar in economic characteristics and are contiguous. Please note that establishing limits on a regional or statewide basis is only applicable to Option 1.

Question: If the limits are to be based on a regional or statewide basis, how is the market value of a typical improved site determined?

The average market value of typical improved sites for the counties that share similar economic characteristics can be used provided that the range in values between counties is minimal.

Question: According to the October 28th memorandum, a written explanation as to how the typical market value of an improved site in each area was derived and supporting documentation must be included in the package for prior approval. What constitutes supporting documentation?

Answer: During the Single Family Housing teleconference on November 12, 2002, a correction was made to this requirement; States will only be required to provide a written explanation as to how the typical market value of an improved site in each area was derived. Supporting documentation, such as the comparables used in the analysis, will not be required in the prior approval package.

Question: Can a State issue a State Administrative Notice instead of a State Instruction establishing which option was selected and the proposed area loan limit(s) for each county?

Answer: Yes.

Question: When will the new limits go into effect?

Answer: The new limits will go into effect 90 days from publication of the 7 CFR 3550 Final Rule, which occurred on December 24, 2002. The effective date is March 24, 2003. This was done so that all limits would be effective at the same time.

Question: The aforementioned memorandum states that, "Upon approval of your State Instruction, the new area loan limits will go into effect until FY 2004." Is this a typo?

Answer: Once the FY 2003 figures go into effect on March 24, 2003, they will be in effect until FY 2004. Recall that the limits will now be reviewed/updated every fiscal year. After the implementation date, new residential cost figures will be supplied in time to be effective with the start of the new fiscal year.

Question: Can we round the area loan limits once established?

If Option 1 is the selected method, the figures derived from adding the residential cost data to the market value of typical improved sites as determined by the State can be rounded to the nearest \$100.

If Option 2 is the selected method, the SHA's limits can not be rounded. The SHA's limits are what they are; the States can not make adjustments to these limits.

Question: The spreadsheets that were sent via email to the Program Directors on November 25, 2002, provided the average residential cost figure for the State. Can this average be used in the analysis?

Answer: No. As stated in the spreadsheet, the average was provided for comparison purposes only.

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Brooke Baumann of the Single Family Housing Direct Loan Division at (202) 690-4250.

January 7, 2003

TO: State Directors
Rural Development

ATTENTION: Multi-Family Housing Program Directors

FROM: Arthur A. Garcia *(Signed by Arthur A. Garcia)*
Administrator
Rural Housing Service

SUBJECT: FY 2002 Site Manager of the Year Recognition Program

We are conducting the Multi-Family Housing Site Manager of the Year program again this year. The level of participation in the program increases every year. This year, we want all States to participate.

Awards may be presented in each of the following three categories: (1) Site Manager of the Year for Housing for the Elderly; (2) Site Manager of the Year for Housing for Families; and (3) Site Manager of the Year for Farm Labor Housing. We will choose a national winner in all three categories this spring.

You should use the following selection criteria for making your choice in each category:

- Tenant satisfaction with the manager is high.
- Property has good curb appeal on a continuous basis.
- Manager keeps accurate and complete records and has no incidents of non-compliance and no unresolved violations.
- Manager consistently does more than what is expected.

These criteria may be added to, but do not eliminate any. We ask that you use these primary criteria so that the program can be consistent nationwide and receiving the award means the same thing in every state.

As in past years, if you want a certificate of recognition for your State winners signed by a National Office official, please submit only the Site Manager Nomination Form. Please include the full name of the State Director as you want it to appear on the certificate. This form should be sent by facsimile to (202) 720-0302.

EXPIRATION DATE: March 31, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Housing Programs

If you are submitting the name of someone to be considered for National Site Manager, please submit a complete package. This should include all the information you used in determining the selection at the State level.

Good photographs and letters of commendation from public officials and tenants are always beneficial. The selection panel at the National Office level has only the material you submit upon which to base their determination of the winners.

Please be sure to address the criteria item regarding record keeping and noncompliance. A statement from the servicing official may be helpful, along with supervisory visits and compliance reviews.

We are requesting that you submit your package in a three-ring binder so that no information is misplaced or overlooked. Please clearly mark your State and the category on the nomination package. Please be aware that we continue to have problems with the mail, so your packages should be sent by Federal Express or similar carrier in order to be received in good condition and in a timely fashion. Address packages to: USDA Rural Housing Service, Melba Swarey, Room 1221, STOP CODE 0782, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250.

The deadline for receipt of nomination packages for National Site Manager of the Year is March 31, 2003.

It is our hope that you will continue to make this valuable program a success. If you have any questions, please call Melba Swarey of our Multi-Family Housing staff at 202-720-1613.

Attachments

1. Site Manager of the Year Recognition Program Guidelines
2. Sample Cover Letter Announcing Awards Program to People Who Might be Interested in Making Nominations
3. Best Section 515 or 514 Site Manager Nomination Form
4. Sample Letter to Senator
5. 2002 Site Manager of the Year Award Winners National Office Notification Form
6. Section 515 or 514 Site Manager Recognition Program Evaluation

SITE MANAGER OF THE YEAR RECOGNITION PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Following are guidelines and suggestions for implementing or continuing a Manager of the Year program in your State.

1. Determine who is eligible to receive the award. The idea behind this recognition program is to reward site managers who have close interaction with tenants and who deal with properties hands-on and on a daily basis. In some States, these managers live on the property they manage, while in others they live off-site and manage more than one property. Each State should decide whether it makes sense to limit the nominations to resident managers or to extend it to traveling site managers. Remember, however, that the recognition should be for an individual site manager and not owners or management companies.
2. Solicit nominations from tenants and Section 515 and 514 owners and management companies, as well as others you consider knowledgeable. The nomination process should be open so that you get the maximum number of nominations.
3. Publicize the program so as to maximize the number of nominations you get. Consider using local media resources and your local borrower associations and housing groups as well.
4. Make your selection based on the following criteria (you may add more, but at a minimum use the ones below):
 - a. tenant satisfaction with the manager is high
 - b. property has good curb appeal on a continuous basis
 - c. manager keeps accurate and complete record systems and has no incidents of noncompliance and no unresolved violations
 - d. manager consistently does more than what is expected

Please use these primary criteria so that the manager recognition program can be consistent nationwide--so that receiving this award means the same thing in every state.

Attached, you will find a nomination form that explains these criteria in somewhat more detail. To address the fact that most nominators will not know whether a manager keeps good records, please use the following suggestion: once you have received a nomination, an RHS Multi-Family Housing specialist who knows about the nominee's records should certify that he or she meets the "manager keeps accurate and complete record systems and has no violations" criterion. It may be helpful to the selection panel if a recent inspection report (supervisory visit, compliance review, physical inspection) is included.

5. Use a panel of representatives from different stakeholder groups to make your selections. Use a panel consisting of RHS Multi-Family Housing staff and management industry representatives, as well as others you think would be appropriate. Possible panelists include tenants, staff from HUD, a State Housing Finance Agency, a Public Housing Authority, or local civic leaders. The idea is to give an award that is recognized by a wide variety of industry and civic professionals.
6. If you have a large portfolio, you might consider using a two-phased process to make your selection. Area or local offices could convene a panel to choose the best manager in their region and then forward the nomination package to the State Office, which could convene a panel to make the final selection.
7. Choose the best manager and submit your nomination to the National Office by March 31, 2003.

8. Notify the National Office of the name (or names) of the Site Manager(s) of the Year if you wish to have a certificate signed by the Administrator for your State winner(s). Send this information, as well as the name and address of the facility or facilities the manager oversees, to Melba Swarey at fax number (202) 720-0302. If you are nominating your winner for the National Site Manager competition, please send (by Federal Express or similar carrier) the complete package upon which you based your determination.

9. Consider presenting this award jointly with other management groups or at a State management conference. That way, you can highlight the achievements of the manager to a broad group of his or her peers. You may also consider presenting the award at a housing complex the manager oversees.

10. Take advantage of this opportunity for favorable press coverage. The manager recognition program is a chance to highlight one of the most positive aspects of our Multi-Family Housing program. Not only will press coverage help remind communities of how our programs help them, it will also focus their attention on one of their truly outstanding members whom they may not know. Encourage press coverage by inviting the press to your awards ceremony and by distributing press releases.

11. Let your Congressional delegation know about the winners in their districts. This gives members of Congress a chance to send a letter of recognition to the managers. It also highlights the success of our Multi-Family Housing program in serving communities. Attached is a sample letter you may use to send to your congressional delegation for the Site Manager of the Year program.

SAMPLE COVER LETTER ANNOUNCING AWARDS PROGRAM TO PEOPLE WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN MAKING NOMINATIONS

NOMINATOR'S NAME
NOMINATOR'S ADDRESS

Dear [NOMINATOR]:

I know you will agree with me that USDA Rural Housing Service (RHS) Section 515 and Section 514 rental housing site managers guarantee the success of these complexes. They make sure that day-to-day operations go smoothly, and often they invest a great deal of their own free time in providing tenants with a safe and cohesive community. Although these managers would do their jobs regardless of whether they received recognition, I believe we as management industry professionals should do whatever we can to let them know we appreciate their efforts. They deserve recognition for their outstanding work, and for this reason, we are sponsoring a program to recognize the best RHS site manager in [STATE NAME]. I hope that you might be able to join me in this important program by nominating someone you consider to be an outstanding site manager.

Please use the attached form to nominate the manager. You will note that the form asks you to comment on three factors:

- the level of tenant satisfaction with the manager
- the curb appeal of the manager's property
- the manager's consistently doing more than what the job requires.

In an effort to make this process easy for you and for our review panel, I ask that you keep your descriptions brief. Also, please enclose two or more photographs of the manager's property that depict its curb appeal. Submit the nomination package to [ADDRESS] no later than [YOUR DEADLINE].

After we receive the nominations, we will use the following process to choose the best RHS site manager in [STATE NAME].

[DESCRIBE YOUR EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS HERE.]

We will present a plaque of recognition to the winner at a ceremony in [DATE, LOCATION, SPECIFY IF CEREMONY WILL BE HELD JOINTLY WITH SOMEONE ELSE OR AT AN ALREADY SCHEDULED CONFERENCE]. We also hope to engage the press in recognizing the exceptional efforts of the winning manager as well as all of our other great managers.

I hope that you will take a few moments to complete the enclosed nomination form. I can assure you that it will be worth your time.

Sincerely,
[STATE DIRECTOR]

**BEST SECTION 515 OR 514 SITE MANAGER
NOMINATION FORM**

Please address the following criteria in the space provided. Remember, keep your answers short and to the point; however, the more letters, pictures, and documentation you can provide, the better.

I. Tenant Satisfaction. Overall, are tenants happy with the efforts this manager makes on their behalf and on the behalf of the housing complex? How do you know? Attach any letters from tenants or other supporting documentation.

II. Curb Appeal. Is the property attractively maintained and landscaped? Please submit at least two pictures that demonstrate the appeal of the property. Also, please describe the property in writing in the space below. If applicable, you may wish to discuss particular actions the manager has taken to increase the appeal of the property.

III. Action above and beyond what is expected. Please describe any actions this manager takes on a consistent basis which make him or her truly exceptional and outstanding. Good pictures also help in this category.

**SAMPLE LETTER TO SENATOR
PLEASE CONSIDER A SIMILAR LETTER TO YOUR CONGRESSIONAL
DELEGATION**

Honorable xxxxxxxxx
United States Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0103

Dear Senator/Congressmanxxxxxxxx:

I am writing to inform you that xxxxxx has been chosen as the xxxxxxxxx 2002 Site Manager of the Year for the USDA Rural Housing Service Multi-Family Housing Program. XXXXXXXXXXXXR operates the xxxxxxx Apartments in xxxxxxx.

As you may be aware, the Rural Housing Service is an agency within the Rural Development mission area. We administer a national loan portfolio of over 17,000 rural rental housing complexes. In partnership with our private-sector and nonprofit borrowers, we house very low- and low-income rural families, elderly people, and farmworkers. The site managers of the housing complexes we finance are employees of private companies, not the US Government.

The site managers guarantee the success of our housing complexes. They make sure that day-to-day operations go smoothly, and they often invest a great deal of their own free time in providing tenants with a safe and cohesive community. Although these managers would do their jobs whether or not they received recognition, we believe that as lenders and program managers we should reward excellent performance.

In this spirit, we conducted a Manager of the Year competition in each State this year. State Rural Development staffs convened panels of public and private housing management experts to choose their best site managers. They used the following criteria: 1) tenant satisfaction; 2) property curbside appeal; 3) accurate and complete record keeping; and 4) consistent performance of actions above and beyond the call of duty. States could add to these criteria, but they could not change or drop any of them.

The comments we received from tenants and our State Offices are testimony to the outstanding performance of the site managers. Following are a few typical examples:

- *He makes us very proud of where we live.*
- *They are always there to help with anything you need, no matter how big or small.*
- *He shows genuine concern and really puts his heart into the job.*
- *They look after my parents when I'm not there. I don't know what I would do without them.*
- *He listens to the tenants.*
- *She enforces the rules fairly and makes us all feel safe.*
- *My friends [from outside the complex] always comment on how beautiful and well maintained our grounds and buildings are.*
- *One of the greatest things about living here is the great security I feel. Once I became ill in the middle of the night. I pulled the chain on my alarm system and the managers were in my apartment immediately.*
- *Living here is like living at a big home full of loving friends and family. Once I was too sick to go to the barbecue [which the manager had organized], so the manager brought me a plate of food and sat down to tell me who was there and what the grandkids were doing. She really made me feel included in the fun.*

Ms. xxxxxxxx is a credit to herself, the apartments she manages, her employer, her community, USDA, and the Federal Government as a whole. If you would like to recognize Ms. Xxxxxxxx, you may contact her at xxxxxxxxxxxx. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact xxxxxxxx State Director xxxxxxxxxxxx at xxxxxxxxxxxx.

Sincerely,

State Director
Rural Development

**2002 SITE MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS
NATIONAL OFFICE NOTIFICATION FORM**

Please use this form to let the National Office know how many winners there were in your State as well as the following: (1) who your State has selected as its Site Manager(s) of the Year, (2) the exact name of the category for which they have been chosen, (3) the name of the property/properties they manage, (4) the address to which the certificate(s) should be mailed, and (5) the date by which you need the certificate(s). Thanks.

TO: Melba Swarey
PHONE #: 202-720-1613
FAX #: 202-720-0302

FROM:
STATE:
PHONE #:
FAX #:

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING THIS ONE:

Number of Winners in Your State:_____

1. Name of Award Winner #1_____

2. Name(s) of Property/Properties He/She/They Manage(s)_____

3. Exact Name of the Category for Which He/She/They Were Chosen Winner (as it should appear on the certificate--for example, 2002 Pennsylvania Multi-Family Housing Site Manager of the Year for Elderly Housing) _____

4. Address to which the Certificate Should Be Sent (This should be someone at the State Office, so that the State Director can sign the certificate.) _____

5. Date by Which You Need the Certificate

1. Name of Award Winner #2_____

2. Name(s) of Property/Properties He/She/They Manage(s)_____

3. Exact Name of the Category for Which He/She/They Were Chosen Winner (as it should appear on the certificate--for example, 2002 USDA Pennsylvania Multi-Family Housing Site Manager of the Year) _____

4. Address to which the Certificate Should Be Sent _____

5. Date by Which You Need the Certificate_____

1. What elements of the program functioned particularly well?
2. What elements of the program should be improved or abandoned?
3. If the State were to run the program next year, what should be done differently?

January 8, 2003

SUBJECT: Request for Travel Card Information

TO: Rural Development State Directors

ATTN: Administrators Program Directors

The Department's Office of the Chief Financial Officer, relating to the Bank of America (BOA) travel card, has recently informed us that three (3) data items must be reported on a quarterly basis by all Agencies. Therefore, I request your assistance in providing the following information:

1. Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) dedicated to the travel program,
2. Number of employees found to be abusing their travel cards, and
3. Number of disciplinary actions taken

Please submit this information to Theresa L. Hollowell, via fax (202-692-0034) or via email thollowe@rdmail.rural.usda.gov by close of business January 8, 2003.

This data must also be submitted on a quarterly basis by the close of business on the following dates: Friday, March 28, 2003, Friday, June 27, 2003, and Friday, September 26, 2003. Please note that effective January 6, 2003,

Theresa Hollowell is the BOA contact replacing Dewy Barnes. In light of all the recent changes, please provide to Ms. Hollowell a current name, email, phone and fax numbers of the BOA Coordinator and Alternate for your office.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this report, please feel free to contact Theresa Hollowell at 202-692-0227. I appreciate your timely response in this matter and apologize for any inconvenience.

(Signed by Sherie Hinton Henry)

SHERIE HINTON HENRY
Deputy Administrator
for Operations and Management

EXPIRATION DATE:
September 30, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by electronic mail on 01-08-03 at 10:05 a.m. by SSD.

January 8, 2003

SUBJECT: Interest Rates for Community Facilities

TO: Rural Development State Directors,
Rural Development Managers,
and Community Development Managers

Effective from January 1, 2003, through March 31, 2003, the interest rates for direct community facility loans are as follows:

Poverty Line...unchanged at..... 4.500%
Intermediate....unchanged at..... 4.625%
Market.....unchanged at..... 4.875%

Please notify appropriate personnel of these rates.

(Signed by Arthur A. Garcia)

ARTHUR A. GARCIA
Administrator
Rural Housing Service

Sent by Electronic Mail on 12-27-02 at 2:30 p.m. by PAD.

EXPIRATION DATE:
December 31, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

January 9, 2003

SUBJECT: Submission of Lead Agency Reimbursement Agreements

TO: Rural Development State Directors
National Office Officials

This memorandum is to remind States and National Office Officials that lead agency reimbursement agreement estimates will not be entered into the Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS) without appropriate supporting documentation.

The Budget staff will only enter allotments in FFIS for lead agency reimbursement estimates that are accompanied with a fully executed AD-672 (Reimbursement or Advance of Fund Agreement) or on FSA-875 (Reimbursable Agreement). An AD-672 or FSA-875 must be submitted each fiscal year to the Budget Division with a specific amount of funding for that fiscal year, and signed and dated by all authorized parties.

Your cooperation in providing this information for FY 2003 to the Budget Division by January 24, 2003, will assist us in providing your allotment for Fund 01R in FFIS. For questions and concerns about this matter, please contact Linda Solomon on (202) 692-0134.

(Signed by Deborah B. Lawrence)

DEBORAH B. LAWRENCE
Acting Director
Budget Division

EXPIRATION DATE:
January 31, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by electronic mail on 01/13/03 at 4:50 p.m. by the Budget Division.

January 15, 2003

SUBJECT: USDA Video, Teleconferencing, and Radio (VTR) Center Services

TO: National Office Officials
Rural Development

The Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch (RPMB) has the responsibility of maintaining and reconciling the budgetary funds of Rural Development in regards to video and radio. To place better controls on managing our funds, we are requiring that all orders for VTR services with the exception of teleconferencing, for which arrangements have already been made, be processed by RPMB. VTR has been instructed not to accept any requisitions that have not been signed by Jeanne Jacobs or Renita Bolden, RPMB.

To process an order, you may call Renita Bolden (202-692-0035) to fill out a Form AD-845, "Request for Video, Teleconference, and Radio," by phone or you may send a completed form by Fax (202-692-0034). RPMB will provide an agency number, billing information, and signature then fax the form back to you. Form AD-845 is available at (<http://www.usda.gov/agency/oc/vtr/ad845.pdf>).

If you have any questions, please contact Renita Bolden. Thank you for your cooperation.

(Signed by Sherie Hinton Henry)

SHERIE HINTON HENRY
Deputy Administrator
for Operations and Management

EXPIRATION DATE:
December 3, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by Electronic Mail on 01-16-03 at 9:00 a.m by RPMB.

January 15, 2003

SUBJECT: Rural Business-Cooperative Service Success Stories / Best Practices

TO: State Directors, Rural Development

ATTN: Business Programs Directors

In preparation for the Fiscal Year 2004 Budget Hearings, we are requesting that you provide information on Business Programs projects that have either been obligated or closed, within the last 2 fiscal years, which illustrate the specific intent of the respective program. We need success stories for all Business Programs (i.e., Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program, Intermediary Relending Program, Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, Rural Business Opportunity Grant Program, Rural Economic Development Loan Program, and Rural Economic Development Grant Program).

We are specifically interested in projects that have been obligated or closed within the Congressional Districts of the House Appropriation Subcommittee members and the States represented by the Senate Subcommittee members. Attached is the membership listing of the Senate and House 107th Congressional Subcommittees on Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies which we provided to you last year. We expect that a large percentage of the membership will remain the same for the 108th Congressional Subcommittees, but understand that it may be some time before a final listing will be available.

We are especially interested in projects that support the Administration/Departmental initiatives. Projects impacting the following initiative areas should be included: persistent poverty, out-migration, natural disasters, base closures, small and beginning farmers, value-added agriculture, biobased/bioenergy and other alternative energy, etc.

EXPIRATION DATE:
January 31, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Community/Business Programs

Even if your project is not used in the testimony, all submitted projects will be put on a special Rural Business-Cooperative Service web page (www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/bprac.htm) under the special section "Best Practices." Please include the following information:

1. Name of Lender / Borrower / Grantee
2. Name of Project
3. City and State
4. Program and dollar amount of project and the date closed/obligated
5. Description of the project and how it illustrates the specific intent of the program, our mission area objectives, and Administration/Departmental initiatives
6. Congressional representation (senators and congresspersons)
7. If applicable, jobs created/saved and businesses assisted

Please provide this information **by close of business on Friday, January 31, 2003**, to the Office of the Deputy Administrator, Business Programs, Attn: Chris Humes (chris.humes@usda.gov).

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this request.

Signed William F. Hagy III

WILLIAM F. HAGY III
Deputy Administrator
Business Programs

Attachment (1 page)

Sent by facsimile by DABP on 01-21-03 and 01-22-03.

107TH CONGRESSIONAL SUBCOMMITTEES ON
AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES

SENATE:

WI:	Herb Kohl	MS:	Thad Cochran
CA:	Dianne Feinstein	MO:	Christopher Bond
IA:	Tom Harkin	MT:	Conrad Burns
ID:	Larry E. Craig*	ND:	Byron Dorgan
IL:	Richard J. Durbin*	PA:	Arlen Specter
KY:	Mitch McConnell	SD:	Tim Johnson
		WA:	Patty Murray

*Added for FY 2004

HOUSE:

TX:	Henry Bonilla (Chrm)	MO:	Jo Ann Emerson
CA:	Sam Farr	NY:	Maurice D. Hinchey
CT:	Rosa DeLauro	NY:	James T. Walsh
FL:	Allen Boyd	OH:	Marcy Kaptur
GA:	Jack Kingston	VA:	Virgil H. Goode, Jr.
IL:	Ray LaHood	WA:	George Nethercutt, Jr.
IA:	Tom Latham		

January 16, 2003

SUBJECT: Hotel Energy Charge Settlement

TO: All Rural Development Employees

The General Services Administration (GSA) recently issued Travel Advisory No. 6 announcing that a Class Action Lawsuit was filed against Hilton brand, Hyatt, Marriott brand, and Starwood brand hotels. The Plaintiffs claimed that inadequate notification was given to guests about a separate Energy Charge during certain periods in 2001. The parties involved agreed to settle their disputes to avoid further litigation.

The settlement, approved on November 12, 2002, provides qualifying Class Action Members a certificate for \$10 off a room rate redeemable during a stay at a participating hotel during specifically identified dates. Since the settlement is based on overpayments, settlement certificates are not promotional items and should not be treated as such. Therefore, if you were traveling on official business and you were reimbursed for the energy surcharge by Rural Development (or any other Agency), any settlement or discount coupons you receive as a result of participation must be turned over to the Agency or used for lodging required for future official travel. If your travel was personal, the settlement or discount coupon belongs to you.

You are encouraged to visit the Hotel Energy Charge Settlements website at <http://www.energysettlements.com> to determine if you are a Class Member, the specific hotels involved, and the dates covered under the Class Action.

If you have any questions relating to your rights as a Federal traveler, please review Travel Advisory No. 6 on GSA's website at <http://www.policyworks.gov>.

(Signed by Sherie Hinton Henry)

SHERIE HINTON HENRY
Deputy Administrator
for Operations and Management

EXPIRATION DATE:
January 31, 2004

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by electronic mail on 01-16-02 at 4:00 by SSD.

January 16, 2003

SUBJECT: Carlson Wagonlit Travel Services
Change to Transaction Fee

TO: Rural Development National Office Officials

Based on the headquarters' travel management services contract, Carlson Wagonlit Travel Services increased its transaction fee for agent assisted reservations. This fee increased to \$33.24 effective January 1, 2003. The online booking fee remains at \$25.42 and the car and/or hotel only fee remains at \$8.00.

Please share this information with your staffs. If you have any questions, contact either Irene Wofford at 692-0030 or Theresa Hollowell at 692-0227.

(Signed by Sherie Hinton Henry)

SHERIE HINTON HENRY
Deputy Administrator
for Operations and Management

EXPIRATION DATE:
January 31, 2004

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

Sent by electronic mail on 01-16-03 at 2:00 by SSD.

January 16, 2003

SUBJECT: Interest Rate Changes for Housing Programs
and Credit Sales (Nonprogram)

TO: Rural Development State Directors,
Rural Development Managers,
and Community Development Managers

ATTN: Rural Housing, Program Director

The following interest rate, effective February 1, 2003, is changed as follows:

<u>Loan Type</u>	<u>Existing Rate</u>	<u>New Rate</u>
ALL LOAN TYPES		
Treasury Judgement Rate	1.560%	1.410%

The Treasury Judgement rate is now based on the weekly average 1-year Constant Maturity Treasury (CMT) yield. The rate is published by the Federal Reserve System, Board of Governors. The current rate shown above is as of the week ending 12/27/02. The actual judgement rate that will be used will be the rate for the calendar week preceding the date the defendant becomes liable for interest.

EXPIRATION DATE:
February 28, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Administrative/Other Programs

This rate may be found by going to the Federal Reserve web site for the weekly average 1-year CMT yield (www.federalreserve.gov/releases/h15/data/wf/tcm1y.txt).

Please notify appropriate personnel of this interest rate information.

(Signed by Arthur A. Garcia)

ARTHUR A. GARCIA
Administrator
Rural Housing Service

Sent by Electronic Mail on 01-17-03 at 3:20 pm by PAD.

January 16, 2003

SUBJECT: January 2003 RBS Administrator's Teleconference

TO: State Directors, Rural Development

ATTN: Business Programs Directors and
Cooperative Development Specialists

The monthly Rural Business-Cooperative Service Administrator's Teleconference has been scheduled for Thursday, January 23, 2003, 2:00-4:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Please call:
(202) 554-1742, Passcode 6812#

Each State is allotted only one line, except for those who have requested additional lines. Unless notified to the contrary, those additional line requests have been approved. Please ensure that you use only those lines for which you have been approved to use. As in the past:

- * You should avoid using a speaker phone if possible. If a speaker phone is necessary, please use the "mute" function when not speaking.
- * Please call in 5 minutes before the start of the teleconference at the number listed above.

Attached is a copy of the tentative agenda. Please call my office directly, (202) 690-4730, if you have any questions or concerns regarding this teleconference.

(Signed by Ryan Kociolek) For

JOHN ROSSO
Administrator
Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Attachment (1 page)

Sent by e-mail by DABP on 01-21-02 and 01-22-03.

EXPIRATION DATE:
January 31, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Community/Business Programs

USDA, Rural Development
Rural Business-Cooperative Service

ADMINISTRATOR'S TELECONFERENCE

January 23, 2003, 2:00-4:00 pm Eastern Time
Telephone (202) 554-1742, Access Code: 6812#

A G E N D A

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------|
| * | Roll Call | Hagy |
| * | Opening Comments by the Under Secretary (invited) | Dorr |
| * | Opening Comments by the Administrator | Rosso |
| * | Introduction of Linda Rogers, Environmental Coordinator | Hagy |
| * | Cooperative Services Issues: | Haskell |
| - | Status of Value-Added Product Market | Haskell |
| | Development Grant Announcement | |
| - | Status of Agriculture Innovation Centers | Haskell |
| - | Status of Rural Cooperative Development | Haskell |
| | Grant Program | |
| * | Business Programs Issues: | Hagy |
| - | FY 2003 Program Budget | Hagy |
| - | Accreditation Program | Hagy |
| | - Retirements / Vacancies | Hagy |
| - | Urbanized Areas - ERS Website | Hadjy |
| - | FY 2004 Budget Information - Success Stories | Hagy |
| - | Division Director Reports | |
| | - Special Projects/Programs Oversight Div. | Carmon |
| | - Business and Industry Division | Parker |
| | - Specialty Lenders Division | Ben-Israel/
Hennings |
| * | Roll Call and Questions & Answers from State Office | Hagy |
| * | Closing Comments / Adjourn | Rosso |

January 24, 2003

SUBJECT: Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program
Maximum Dollar Amount on Awards for Fiscal Year 2003

TO: State Directors, Rural Development

ATTN: Business Programs Directors

This is to advise you of the fiscal year (FY) 2003 maximum loan and grant awards under the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) Program.

For FY 2003, it is anticipated that the amount of \$14.966 million will be authorized for zero-interest loans and the amount of \$4 million will be authorized for grants under the REDLG program. Therefore, during FY 2003, the maximum dollar award for zero-interest loans will be \$450,000, and the maximum dollar award for grants will be \$200,000. Attached is a copy of the January 23, 2003, Federal Register Notice announcing the maximum award limits. Please ensure that all program-eligible utilities within your State are advised of these FY 2003 award limits. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

If you have any questions concerning this memorandum, please call Patricia Wing, Loan Specialist, Specialty Lenders Division Processing Branch, (202) 720-9558.

(Signed by William F. Hagy III)

WILLIAM F. HAGY III
Deputy Administrator
Business Programs

Attachment

EXPIRATION DATE:
September 30, 2003

FILING INSTRUCTIONS:
Community/Business Programs

[Federal Register: January 23, 2003 (Volume 68, Number 15)]
[Notices]
[Page 3230]
From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov]
[DOCID:fr23ja03-25]

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Maximum Dollar Amount on Awards Under the Rural Economic
Development Loan and Grant Program for Fiscal Year 2003

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Rural Business-Cooperative Service hereby announces the maximum dollar amount on loan and grant awards under the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program for fiscal year (FY) 2003. The maximum dollar award on zero-interest loans for FY 2003 is \$450,000. The maximum dollar award on grants for FY 2003 is \$200,000. The maximum loan and grant awards stated in this notice are effective for loans and grants made during the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2002, and ending September 30, 2003. REDLG loans and grants are available to Rural Utilities Service electric and telephone utilities to assist in developing rural areas from an economic standpoint.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patricia Wing, Loan Specialist, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA, STOP 3225, Room 6866, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3225. Telephone: (202) 720-9558. FAX: (202) 720-2213.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The maximum loan and grant awards are determined in accordance with 7 CFR 1703.28. The maximum loan and grant awards are calculated as 3.0 percent of the projected program levels, rounded to the nearest \$10,000; however, as specified in 7 CFR 1703.28(b), regardless of the projected total amount that will be available, the maximum size may not be lower than \$200,000. The projected program level during FY 2003 for zero-interest loans is \$14.966 million, and the projected program level for grants is \$4 million. Applying the specified 3.0 percent to the program level for loans, rounded to the nearest \$10,000, results in the maximum loan award of \$450,000. Applying the specified 3.0 percent to the program level for grants results in an amount lower than \$200,000. Therefore, the maximum grant award for FY 2003 will be \$200,000. This notice will be amended should an appropriation in excess of projected levels be received.

Dated: January 13, 2003.
John Rosso,
Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.
[FR Doc. 03-1454 Filed 1-22-03; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3410-XY-P